MARVEL

4

MICHELINIE
FIORELLI
VALENZA

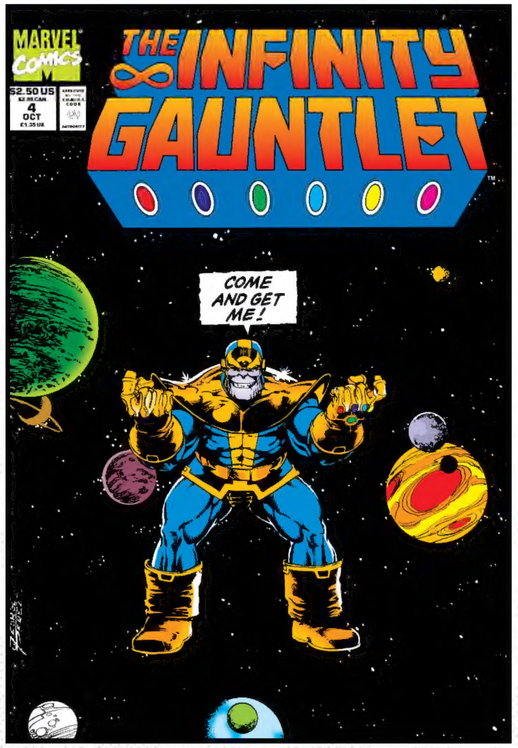
VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR

GEORGE PÉREZ
1954-2022

ART BY PHIL NOTO

"George is one of those ridiculously gifted talents of whom you could ask anything and he would give it to you, in many cases better than you asked." — **CHRIS CLAREMONT**



MARVEL COMICS PAUSES TO REFLECT ON THE LIFE AND CAREER OF BELOVED WRITER AND LEGENDARY ARTIST GEORGE PÉREZ, who was widely known and respected for his incredible talent, kindness and generosity in the comics community and beyond. During his career at Marvel, he contributed to titles such as *Inhumans*, *Fantastic Four* and two long runs on *Avengers*, including his landmark work on *JLA/Avengers*. Pérez co-created Marvel's first Latin American Super Hero and first Puerto Rican mainstream character, Hector Ayala, A.K.A. White Tiger. Pérez had huge hits at DC with *New Teen Titans* and *Crisis on Infinite Earths*. And as both a writer and penciler, he reinvented *Wonder Woman*. He was renowned for his ability (and desire) to include huge numbers of characters in a panel, cleanly and clearly.

Pérez made an indisputable impact on the comics community and its fans. He was well-known for being the friendliest and most approachable creator, especially at conventions. He will be deeply missed by all who knew him and were touched by his many decades of work.

EDDIE BROCK WAS ONCE A RESPECTED JOURNALIST. BUT HIS CAREER WAS DESTROYED WHEN ONE OF HIS SOURCES WAS EXPOSED AS A FRAUD BY SPIDER-MAN. DISGRACED, BROCK WENT TO HIS NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH TO ASK FORGIVENESS BEFORE TAKING HIS OWN LIFE, UNAWARE THAT AN EXTRATERRESTRIAL PARASITE WAS IN THE PARISH'S BELL TOWER. SPURNED AND LEFT FOR DEAD BY THE AMAZING SPIDER-MAN, THE CREATURE CHOSE BROCK AS ITS HOST. IN THE PROCESS, IT IMBUED HIM WITH ALL OF SPIDER-MAN'S ABILITIES AND MORE: POWERS OF ADHESION, ORGANIC WEB-SHOOTERS ON THE BACK OF EACH HAND AND PREHENSILE TENDRILS WOVEN FROM THE CREATURE'S OWN BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL. ON A TWISTED CRUSADE AND OBSESSED WITH JUSTICE, THEY ARE:

VENOM

LETHAL PROTECTOR

EDDIE BROCK IS IN OVER HIS HEAD.

HE'S LEARNED THAT THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE, ANNE WEYING, IS ENGAGED AND WANTS NOTHING TO DO WITH HIM. A SLEW OF DANGEROUS VILLAINS HAVE ALSO ATTACKED EDDIE ON THE STREETS OF NYC. VENOM'S MANAGED TO FEND OFF THE LIKES OF HYDRO-MAN, HUMBUG AND CHANCE, BUT THEY'RE NOT SURE HOW MUCH MORE THEY CAN TAKE.

THERE'S A PRICE ON VENOM'S HEAD. SOMEONE'S OUT FOR BLOOD. AND THE SINISTER SYMBIOTE IS GOING TO FIND OUT WHO...AND MAKE THEM PAY!

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THANK YOU AGAIN, MR. BROCK. WE'RE GRATEFUL THAT YOU FOUND THE TIME TO JOIN US HERE ON "*NEW YORK NEWSMAKERS.*"

OUR PLEASURE, CHARLENE. AND PLEASE--

--CALL US

VENOM!

in

The MAN behind the CURTAIN

DAVID MICHELINIE *writer*	IVAN FIORELLI *artist*	VC's TRAVIS LANHAM *letterer*	BRYAN VALENZA *colorist*	DEVIN LEWIS & TOM GRONEMAN *editors*

THOUGH WE MUST SAY, YOUR CHOICE OF VENUE IS RATHER DISTURBING.

INSISTING WE REMAIN HERE IN THIS NETWORK *STORAGE FACILITY*, WHILE YOU ENGAGE REMOTELY FROM YOUR STUDIO?

TSK, TSK.

I DO APOLOGIZE, MR.--*UH*, VENOM.

BUT I'M AFRAID THE STATION'S INSURANCE PROVIDER INSISTED.

GET TO THE POINT, CHARLIE! WE DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH TIME WE'VE GOT!

ER, WHEN YOU CONTACTED US, YOU SAID SOMETHING ABOUT AN ***ANNOUNCEMENT*** YOU'D LIKE TO MAKE...?

THAT'S RIGHT, CHARLENE. WE'VE DECIDED TO APPEAR AT NOON AT YANKEE STADIUM IN THE BRONX, WHERE WE WILL PROCEED TO OFFER OURSELF UP AS--

--A *TARGET!*

YOU SEE, LATELY, WE'VE BEEN SUBJECTED TO UNPROVOKED ATTACKS AND ONLY RECENTLY LEARNED THAT A *BOUNTY* HAS BEEN PLACED ON OUR HEAD.

SO RATHER THAN WAIT FOR ANY MORE ANNOYING INTRUSIONS, WE'VE DECIDED TO PUT AN *END* TO IT.

THEREFORE, TO ANY GREED-MOTIVATED MISCREANTS EAGER FOR A ONE-ON-ONE:

YOU'LL KNOW WHERE TO FIND US!

BUT WHAT IF THESE POTENTIAL BOUNTY HUNTERS ALL ATTACK AT ONCE? DO YOU REALLY TRUST THEM TO PLAY BY YOUR RULES?

GOODNESS NO, CHARLENE! WE LEARNED LONG AGO NOT TO TRUST *ANYONE.*

POLICE

WHICH IS WHY WE ASSUMED THIS INTERVIEW WOULD ACTUALLY BE--

KRAKATAK BDRRRP

--A TRAP!

CHPOOM CHPOOM

HEY! WHERE'D HE GO?

POLICE

WHEREVER WE *WANT* TO! AFTER ALL--

--WE *ARE* VENOM!

P-PLEASE!

WHAT YOU ARE IS *TOAST*, HOTSHOT!

THANKS TO THIS FULL MAG OF *MICRO-TASERS!*

KZZ-ZZ-ZZZK

THEY'RE ALREADY MELTIN' THAT GOOP YOU WEAR-- SPLATTERIN' IT EVERY WHICH WAY!

OR--

CHUKA CHUKAH

TAKATOW

KCHASH

WHAMP

--EVERY WHICH WAY WE *TELL* THEM TO GO!

WE APPRECIATE YOUR PROVIDING A VIDEO SOAPBOX, CHARLENE, BUT WE REALLY HAVE TO GO NOW.

PERHAPS WE CAN DO THIS AGAIN SOMETIME.

REAL SOON...!

OH MAN! WH-WHAT'RE YA GONNA DO, CHARLIE?

WELL, *ULP*, I--I'VE HEARD THERE ARE SOME EXCELLENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SÃO PAULO...!

MEANWHILE, AT AN EXCLUSIVE CONDOMINIUM RESIDENCE ON MANHATTAN'S UPPER WEST SIDE...

REALLY, MR. STYX--

--JONATHAN *CAESAR* WAS GENEROUS ENOUGH TO PROVIDE US WITH LODGINGS IN ONE OF HIS PROPERTIES WHILE HE'S INCARCERATED.

THE LEAST YOU COULD DO IS *NOT* KILL ALL OF HIS HOUSE-PLANTS WHILE WE'RE HERE!

BOSH! YOU ALWAYS WERE A PARTY POOPER, MR. STONE.

I'M BORED.

THEN THINK HOW MUCH EXCITEMENT THAT $200,000 *BOUNTY* WILL BUY!

TRUE, YANKEE STADIUM WILL BE PACKED WITH MORE HIGH-END CROOKS THAN A POLITICIAN'S POOL PARTY! BUT THAT'S WHY *WE'RE* GOING TO HIT VENOM--

--*BEFORE* HE GETS THERE!

THIS SCANNER WILL PICK UP POLICE REPORTS AS SOON AS VENOM IS SPOTTED. AND ONCE WE KNOW WHAT ROUTE HE'S TAKING, WE CAN AMBUSH--

HELLO? CONCIERGE?

PLEASE HAVE A BASKET OF KITTENS SENT UP TO THE PENTHOUSE RIGHT AWAY.

YES, A DOZEN OR SO SHOULD DO NICELY--!

NEVER MIND! CANCEL THAT ORDER!

YOU'RE MY PARTNER, MR. STYX, AND I HIGHLY VALUE YOUR ROLE IN OUR ADVENTURES. BUT SOMETIMES...

...YOU CAN BE A REAL PAIN!

MEANWHILE SLIGHTLY WEST OF THE EAST RIVER...

YES, BUT IF WE ARRIVE AT THE STADIUM *EARLY*, WE CAN CHECK OUT THE FOOD TRUCKS.

WE HAVEN'T HAD KETTLE CORN SINCE--

LEAVE US ALONE!

A MUGGING? HOW QUAINT! SPIDER-MAN LOVES STOPPING THOSE! MAYBE WE SHOULD WAIT TILL HE ARRIVES--

--THEN MUG *HIM!*

YOU'VE GOT OUR MONEY-- WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT?

OH, I WAS THINKIN' 'BOUT A NICE LITTLE BONUS...FROM THE LADY!

NO!

HNGK!

STUPID PEOPLE DESERVE TO DIE...

AND DEFILERS OF INNOCENCE DESERVE WORSE!

ALLOW US--

PLLATCH

--TO DEMONSTRATE!

KRUNCH

HE...HE'S DEAD.

YES, HIS MISPLACED BRAVADO KILLED HIM.

NO. IT WASN'T BRAVADO. HE DIED...

...BECAUSE HE *LOVED* ME.

MEANWHILE FAR TO THE SOUTH, AMID THE GREEN-BLUE BEAUTY OF THE CARIBBEAN...

GETTIN' BETTER, DEATH-SHIELD. ONLY GOT CLIPPED BY *ONE* OF MY BLADES THAT TIME!

I'M LUCKY I'M NOT IN *RIBBONS* BY NOW!

THIS TRAININ' REGIMEN THE BIG BOSS SET UP IS A KILLER!

WHAT'D YOU EXPECT?

THE FLYER IN THE BAR WITH NO NAME *SAID* HE WAS BUILDIN' AN ARMY.

YEAH, BUT HE DIDN'T MENTION THAT WAS TO FIGHT *ANOTHER* ARMY!

STILETTO! DEATH-SHIELD! LESS TALK, MORE WORK!

YEESH. NO WONDER THEY CALL 'IM TASKMASTER!

OKAY, PAL. TRY TO HIT ME WITH YOUR--

--SHIELD.

K-TONK

GRAMERCY PARK, LOWER MANHATTAN.

I *KNOW* THIS IS OUT OF OUR WAY! BUT THAT MUGGING INCIDENT REMINDED ME OF SOMETHING. OF...

"...SOME-ONE."

SO KISS ME AND SMILE FOR ME, TELL ME--

WHA--?

HEY THERE, ANNIE. WE--I--I MEAN I--JUST STOPPED BY TO SEE HOW YOU WERE DOING.

DOING?

HOW THE HELL DO YOU *THINK* I'M DOING?!

HUH?!

I GOT A CALL FROM ALLEN. YOU REMEMBER ALLEN, DON'T YOU?

MY EX-FIANCÉ?

HE'S GONE FROM MY LIFE FOREVER NOW--

--BECAUSE OF WHAT *YOU* SAID YOU'D DO TO HIM IF HE *WASN'T!**

B-BUT, ANNE, HE WAS A BAD MAN! HE WOULD HAVE *HURT* YOU--!

AND YOU THINK I'M SO EMOTIONALLY CRIPPLED THAT I WOULDN'T HAVE *REALIZED* THAT?

*LAST ISSUE, --TOMMY G.

GEEZ, ANNIE, A-ALL I WANTED WAS TO--

PROTECT ME? I GET THAT. IT'S ONE OF THE THINGS THAT MAKES YOU WHO YOU ARE.

BUT THIS IS *MY* LIFE WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE! AND THAT SHOULD HAVE BEEN *MY* DECISION!

MAYBE ONE DAY I'LL GET OVER IT. MAYBE ONE DAY I'LL WANT YOU BACK IN MY LIFE.

BUT NOT TODAY. PLEASE, JUST...

...GO.

AND...

I'VE BEEN SO CONFUSED LATELY. BUT I'M BEGINNING TO SEE A PATTERN.

THAT MUGGING VICTIM DIED BECAUSE OF LOVE.

ANNIE HATES ME NOW BECAUSE OF LOVE. THAT... THAT MUST BE IT!

WE'RE JUST TOO LOVING!

SHHHRANG

WHOOF

VWAK

KPONK

WUMP

STYX? AND STONE?

WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU'D SHOW UP TO CLAIM YOUR SHARE OF THE BLOOD MONEY!

BUT WHAT THE HECK-- WELCOME TO THE PARTY!

WE'RE IN THE *MOOD* TO BREAK THINGS!

SKMASH

THAT WALKING *CANCER* IS THE DANGEROUS ONE!

HIS KILLING TOUCH TOOK YOU OUT FOR THE COUNT WHEN WE FOUGHT BEFORE!*

*IN AMAZING SPIDER-MAN #333.

BUT SANTAYANA NAILED IT WHEN HE SAID, "THOSE WHO CANNOT REMEMBER THE PAST ARE CONDEMNED TO REPEAT IT."

FOR NOT ONLY DO WE *REMEMBER* OUR EXPERIENCE--

--WE'VE LEARNED HOW TO *USE* IT!

SORRY, OLD BOY, MY POWERS DON'T WORK THAT WAY.

IF THEY DID, I WOULD HAVE DONE *MYSELF* IN AGES AGO!

TOO BAD SANTAYANA DIDN'T HAVE A SNAPPY SAYING TO COVER *THAT* LITTLE TWIST!

HANG BACK, MR. STYX! I CAN HANDLE HIM NOW!

ADHESIVE GEL SHOULD KEEP HIM STUCK LONG ENOUGH--

SSSLOOSH

--FOR *GAS PODS* TO KNOCK HIM OUT!

RHOOF

EVEN A HYBRID HORROR LIKE HIM HAS TO BREATHE!

OR... MAYBE NOT?

SKAKLASH

YOUR BACKPACK ARSENAL LOOKS LIKE IT'S SEEN BETTER DAYS, STONE.

ISN'T THIS THE PART WHERE YOU RUN AWAY?

NOT WHILE I CAN IMPROVISE!

AND THIS *GASOLINE IMPACT DRILL* SHOULD MAKE A DANDY REPLACEMENT!

VRRRRNG

IT'S ALREADY PULLING THAT ALIEN GOOP AWAY FROM YOUR BODY!

HHZHNG

AH, BUT ONE MAN'S PULL--

--CAN BE ANOTHER MAN'S *PUSH!*

WHAMSH

THEN TRY PUSHING *ME!* WHATEVER TOUCHES MY SKIN, DIES!

SOMEONE *IS* GOING TO DIE, STYX!

PERHAPS YOU CAN CONSIDER THAT WHEN *CONSCIOUSNESS* RETURNS!

BUT IT WON'T BE *US!*

NOW, WHO PUT YOU UP TO THIS?! WHO PUT THE PRICE ON OUR HEAD? *TALK!*

OR THE NEXT PILE OF DUST ON THE GROUND WILL BE YOUR *PARTNER!*

I...I'VE OFTEN WONDERED WHAT IT WOULD BE LIKE...TO END THE LIFE OF ONE WITH SUCH STRENGTH, SUCH VITALITY! IT MUST BE...

...GLORIOUS!

BUT...MR. STONE TOOK ME FOR WHAT I AM, WHEN ALL OTHERS SHUNNED ME. HE...HE'S MY FRIEND. MY...

...ONLY...

...FRIEND.

I'LL TELL YOU...WHAT YOU WANT TO KNOW.

AND SOON, AS A *METRO SPECIAL INCIDENT* TEAM ARRIVES TO SECURE THE SCENE...

--BUT THE *RESULT* IS THE SAME. AT LAST, WE KNOW THE NAME OF THE MAN RESPONSIBLE FOR OUR PERSECUTION.

NOW THERE'S ONLY ONE THING LEFT TO FIGURE OUT:

THAT WASN'T HOW WE PLANNED IT--

JUST WHO THE BLOODY BLAZES IS *JUSTIN HAMMER?!*

MEANWHILE IN A POSH SAUNA WHOSE GLITTERING GOLD FITTINGS RIVAL THE SPARKLE OF THE NEARBY CARIBBEAN SEA...

I'M SORRY, MR. HAMMER, BUT I'M AFRAID I BRING RATHER ILL TIDINGS.

THEN BY ALL MEANS, LAWRENCE, DO SHARE.

YOUR OPERATIVES IN NEW YORK REPORT THAT THE *VENOM* FELLOW HAS APPARENTLY DISCOVERED YOUR ROLE IN HIS RECENT HARDSHIPS. HE'S BEGINNING TO MAKE INQUIRIES.

UNFORTUNATE, BUT WE ALWAYS KNEW THAT WAS A POSSIBILITY.

BUT VENOM IS SAID TO BE CONSIDERABLY DANGEROUS. WHAT SHALL WE DO IF HE COMES KNOCKING AT OUR DOOR?

WHY, WE DO WHAT ANY CIVILIZED PERSON WOULD DO WHEN COMPANY COMES CALLING.

WE INVITE THE GENTLEMAN *IN!*

TO BE CONTINUED...

NEXT

TOM GRONEMAN
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EXECUTIVE EDITOR

C.B. CEBULSKI
EDITOR IN CHIEF

THE WICKED WEB-SLINGER WANTS YOUR BRAINS--I MEAN, YOUR LETTERS!
SEND YOUR NOTES TO SPIDEYOFFICE@MARVEL.COM. BE SURE TO MARK THEM "OKAY TO PRINT"!

ZONE